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News

Chicago singer so close to 'Making the Band'

By **Valerie Vedral** For RedEye
Valerie Vedral is a RedEye special contributor
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

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These days, it's hard for Will "Lucky" Taylor to go anywhere really without running into a mob of awestruck fans.

Taylor is one of 10 finalists on MTV's "Making the Band 4," where he's called Willie. During the live finale set to air at 9 p.m. Sunday, "Band"-master Diddy will select members of his next band.

"It's crazy," Taylor, 26, said of the stardom he's reached on the show. "I've even been chased out of the mall [by fans]."

If you're a fan of the Park Forest resident, you still can cast a vote at makingtheband.mtv.com.

"It would actually mean the world to me to [be selected on 'Making the Band']," said Taylor, who grew up on the city's South Side. "To know that I've arrived to this point, I'm actually very excited."

Landing on the show was a lucky break for Taylor. The aspiring performer said he was so wrapped up in his music that he hadn't given any thought to trying out for a talent show until some friends at Power 92 FM told him about the auditions.

Taylor's passion for music began at a young age, when he started singing in a church choir. His mom, who Taylor said has been his biggest influence, then entered him in talent shows. He later formed the band Kwiet Storm with a friend.

Taylor and the band toured with other artists and made a video for "Leave Me Alone," which aired on BET's "Midnight Love." Taylor also has worked with artists such as Ginuwine, Jagged Edge, Joe and Avant. After leaving Kwiet Storm, Taylor began working on a solo album but didn't complete the project.

"You have to work, work, work," Taylor said. "It's so hard to break into this game."

He said the daily routine for filming "Making the Band" has been tough. Each



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day began early with a 5-mile run for the already fit Taylor. Then he'd attend vocal lessons and studio sessions.

All that was piled onto rehearsal time to show Diddy that Taylor has the stuff of a dream band member.

"There was very little free time," Taylor said. "This was a different level of grind. It was something that opened my eyes."

Is Taylor nervous about the finale? The confident singer believes he is the total package and hopes that Diddy -- who has said Taylor is the most consistent of the finalists -- feels the same way.

"I'm really looking forward to making life-changing music," Taylor said. "I want to make history, everything you would think of when you get this dream in your head."

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THE DETAILS

Willie Taylor

Born Willie Taylor but also known as Will and "Lucky" to his fans.

Age: 26

Check him out: myspace.com/luckykwietstorm

Dating status: Sorry ladies, Taylor has a girlfriend.

Musical influences: Boyz II Men, Usher, R. Kelly and Diddy

His motivation: 2-year-old son Kavion

Advice to others: "Sometimes the road will get rough. You will sometimes have to sleep in your car. Just keep it moving. Have faith in yourself."



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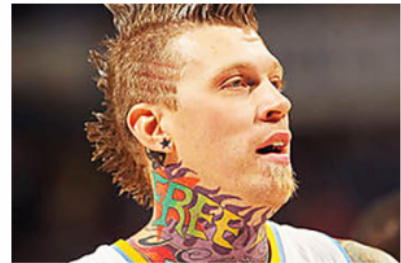
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